



Chicken Booyah

3-4 gallons—a crowd-size recipe

Booyah is a specialty from northeast Wisconsin, a “hand-me-down” recipe little known outside the Green Bay area. Special thanks to my sister, Judy Ullmer, for helping me get the elusive secrets of this well-loved chicken soup down on paper. You can vary the ingredients, but of course I think Judy’s recipe is the *real* thing.

This recipe is dedicated to the memory of my dad, Norbert J. Allen, who was “one hundred percent Belgian,” as he used to proudly say, and a true booyah connoisseur.

1 pound beef stew meat, in 1 piece
 2 pounds onions, chopped
 Bay leaves, salt and pepper
 1 large stewing chicken (6 pounds), cut into pieces
 1 bunch celery, chopped
 1 pound carrots, chopped
 1 pound cabbage, shredded
 ½ pound green beans, chopped
 1 can (28 ounces) chopped tomatoes (or use fresh)
 ½ pound corn (off the cob)
 ½ pound peas (out of the pod)
 2 pounds red potatoes, chopped
 Juice of 2 lemons
 1 tablespoon (or more) soy sauce
 Additional salt and pepper to taste
 2-4 beef bouillon cubes (optional)
 Oyster crackers

1. Place the beef in a very large pot with some of the onion, a few bay leaves and some salt and pepper. Add enough cold water to fill the pot ⅓ full. Bring to simmer, skim surface as needed and cook ½ hour. Add chicken, more water (to keep meat covered) and a little more salt. Continue to simmer another hour or so.
2. Meanwhile, prepare all the vegetables as indicated.
3. When meats are tender, lift them out of the broth. While meat is cooling, add the prepared vegetables, including the remaining onion.
4. Remove bones and skin from cooled beef and chicken. Chop meats and add to pot. Simmer at least two hours—longer preferred. Water may be added during the cooking process, if necessary.
5. Season with lemon juice, soy sauce, salt and pepper and beef bouillon. Serve with oyster crackers.

Judy Ullmer
 Green Bay, Wisconsin



BELGIUM IN WISCONSIN

Booyah is a heartwarming, tradition-laden chicken-vegetable soup that’s a popular Belgian specialty in and around Green Bay, Wisconsin. You’ll find booyah in few cookbooks, for it’s one of those unique local recipes whose unwritten secrets are passed along through the generations. Individual cooks add their own touches, and fierce arguments are known to develop over the “right” way to do booyah.

Some aspects of making booyah are universal, however. Cabbage is a must, and you must include a variety of vegetables. Also, booyah must simmer a long while to develop the full flavor; thus, stewing chickens (not fryers) are preferred. Booyah is cooked in huge pots over outdoor wood-burning barrel-stoves; it’s served at family reunions, neighborhood bars and church picnics. Everyone pitches in to help chop vegetables and provide taste-tests as the soup cooks all day. The large batches yield plenty of leftovers, which freeze well. Oyster crackers are the traditional garnish.

“Good thing we get company once in a while so we get something good to eat.”

Norbert Allen

